

Small Business Review

A tidy little earner

If spring-cleaning the house brings a sparkle to your eye and you can't wait to sort your CDs alphabetically, why not turn your passion into a business by becoming a professional organiser, **Fran Molloy** writes.



CLEANED UP: Carol Posener knocked on doors. Picture: JANE BARRETT

PROFESSIONAL organisers thrive on turning chaos into order, junk rooms into style havens and whipping recalcitrant to-do lists into proper working order.

They are like a super nanny for your stuff, taming misbehaving inanimate objects - and there is big demand for their services outside the traditional workplace as Australians continue to work excessively long hours and time at home becomes more precious.

There are now dozens of professional organisers around Australia - so, of course, they have organised themselves into a professional association.

"We organised a piss-up in a brewery to launch the association," says Lissanne Oliver, president of the

Australasian Association of Professional Organisers.

The newly formed group held the launch at the Emerald Hill brewery in Melbourne in June and already has more than 80 members, reflecting a fast-growing international market for small businesses offering a professional organiser service.

"There are more than 4000 professional organisers around the world, in places like the US, Canada, the UK, South Africa and Europe," Oliver says.

She has appeared as an expert organiser on TV programs such as *Better Homes And Gardens* and *Your Life On The Lawn*. Her own experience in media production and styling for many years gave her lots of skills in organising other people and things, she says.

Professional organisers have diverse backgrounds - architects, designers, accountants, personal assistants, teachers, librarians and nurses, for example - but she believes there are some skills that are common.

"Usually we have worked professionally in roles that have required organising people or content, but mostly we have a range of unusual skills that really suit our industry," she says. "You have to be quite sensitive when you're going through people's stuff and you have to be a good communicator so you can teach new concepts to people. You also have to be a great time manager."

Oliver says most professional organisers run the

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